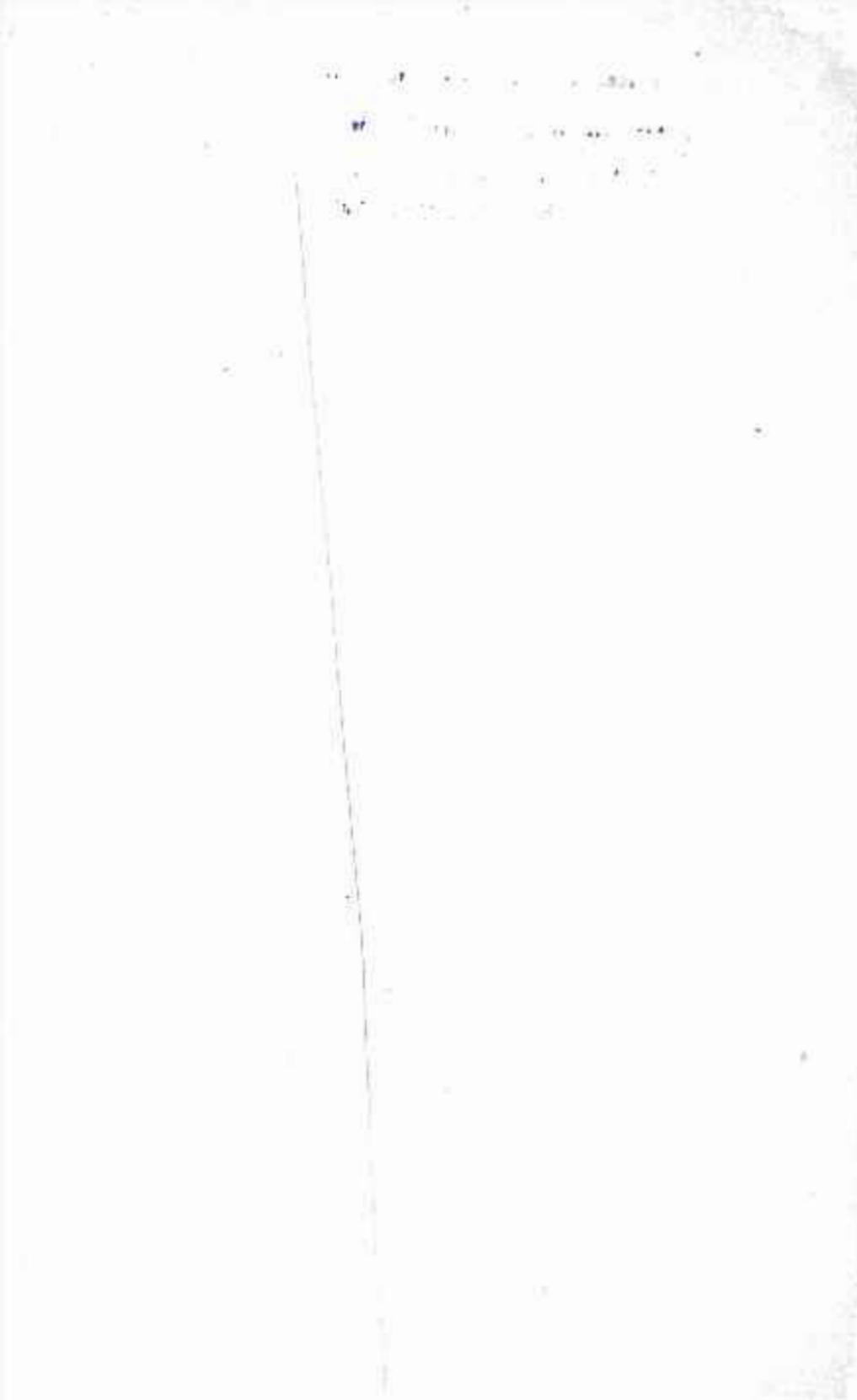


# Man and Faith

By  
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Translated by  
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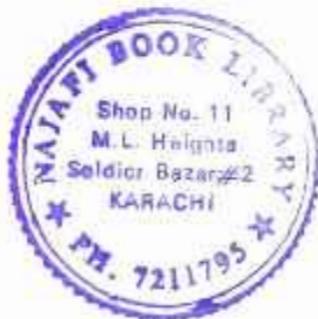
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THE HOLY QUR'AN  
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In deep and grateful acknowledgement of the invaluable services rendered to the cause of Islam and in revered memory of Allama Morteza Mutahhari who on May 1, 1979, fell a martyr to the bullet of an assassin, this publication is humbly dedicated.



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*In the Name of God,  
the Merciful, the Compassionate*

### **Man and Animal**

Man, being in essence an animal, has many characteristics in common with other animates. Yet, there are a series of differences between man and other animals which makes man distinct and unequalled; which grants man superiority.

The basic differences between man and other animates which form the basis of his humanity and have initiated what is called human culture and civilization are found in two aspects: his views and his inclinations.

Animates in general enjoy the distinction of being able to identify themselves and their environment. They are conscious of these two. Self-identification and environmental recognition, on the other hand, support them in their struggle towards their objectives.

Man, like other animates, has a series of desires and goals. He struggles towards those objectives with the support of his knowledge and awareness. The difference between the two is in the dimension of their knowledge, awareness and the level of their objectives. This is what has given man advantage, superiority and distinguishes him from other animals.

### **The Level of Knowledge and Desires in Animals**

An animal's awareness of the environment is only through the senses and is therefore, superficial. It does not involve the awareness of the essence or intricacies of objects. Second, it is singular and limited; and the animal is incapable of generalizing. Third, it is regional and limited to the animal's habitat, having no way out of their environment. Fourth, it is temporary, depending on the present time, cut-off from past and future. An animal knows nothing of the world or their own history and neither thinks, nor struggles nor considers the future.

As far as awareness is concerned, an animal never steps outside the boundaries of externality, individuality, environment, and the present state and by these four limitations, it is imprisoned and if ever it goes beyond these limits, it is not through knowledge and common sense or choice, but unconsciously and only instinctively.

The level of animal desires and tendencies, like that of its awareness and environmental recognition is limited to a certain point. First, it is physical, not going beyond eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, finding shelter and sex. An animal is not concerned with spiritual needs. Moral values and the like are of no concern to it. Second, it is personal and individual, in accordance with itself and at the most its mate and its offspring. Third, it is regional, related to its own area. Fourth, it is momentary, belonging to the present.

In other words, the same limitations which exist in an animal's perception also exist in its physical desires and tendencies: from this point of view, animals are also confined by certain boundaries.

Animals, if they have any goal and move towards any end, based on these limitations, they do so unconsciously and instinctively under the direct command of the power that has created and runs the universe as, for example, that which is particular to the species not the individual, concerning the future not the present time, like that which we see in the life of some social animate beings such as bees.

### **The Level of Human Knowledge and Desire**

The human domain, both in the area of knowledge, vision and recognition and that of desires and tendencies is much more expansive and superior.

Human recognition and knowledge go beyond the superficial understanding of nature. They make a thorough study of nature, interrelations, and all the rules governing natural entities. Human knowledge is not limited by time and place. It transcends both time and place, therefore exploring places beyond the environment such as other planets and also learning about the past and future. The knowledge of man discovers facts about the universe and its past: the earth, skies, mountains, seas, planets, and other animate beings. He contemplates the distant future. Moreover, human thought wanders through infinities and grasps some of them. Man goes beyond individuals and limitation, discovers general facts governing the universe and through this he overcomes nature.

From the point of objectives, man can also have superiority. Man as an idealistic creature, seeks values. He searches for ideals which are not only materialistic and beneficial; ideals which are not allocated only to himself,

## *8 Man and Faith*

but are common and concern humanity. Such ideals are not regional, environmental, and temporal.

Man is so idealistic that he holds his beliefs and ideals higher than any other values. To him, the welfare of his fellow men appears to be more important than his own. A thorn in someone's foot will seem like one in his own foot or even in his own eye. He sympathizes with others, becomes happy with their joy and sad with their sorrow. He cherishes his sacred beliefs so passionately that he easily sacrifices his interests and even his life for them.

The human aspect of man's civilization which is considered the spirit of civilization results from such human feelings and desires.

### **Criteria for Human Superiority**

Man's vast insight into the universe is the out-come of a cumulative human endeavor assembled and evolved in the course of centuries. This insight, which undergoes special logic and criteria, is termed science. Science, in its general sense, meaning human thought about the universe as a whole, including philosophy, is the result of human endeavors en masse and has developed a special logical order.

The spiritual and exalted inclinations of man are derived from his belief in and his attachment to such truths of this world which are non-individual, general, comprehensive and metaphysical, i.e., they have not originated in profit-seeking. Such faith and attachment are, in turn, the outcome of those philosophies and world views that are offered to man either by God's prophets

or by certain philosophers who have wanted to offer some kind of thought inspiring faith and ideals. The exalted and spiritual inclinations of man which transcend his carnal aspects will however be designated as faith when they constitute the foundation of man's thoughts and beliefs.

We conclude, therefore, that the basic and most important difference between man and the other animate beings, is faith and science which is the criteria for his being human; man's humanity depends on faith and science.

The distinction between man and other animates has been widely discussed. Some scholars deny any basic distinction between the two, considering the difference quantitative, at most qualitative, but not essential. All those wonders and grandeurs which have attracted the great philosophers of the East and the West about the issue of recognition in human beings have not been of much interest to this group.

From the point of desires and ideas, this group also considers man to be a complete animal in all respects, without the slightest difference from this point of view.<sup>1</sup> Some others consider that the difference is the fact that a human being is a living creature, and believe that life is inclusive to humanity. Other animals have neither sense nor ambition, nor feeling of pain, nor pleasure. They are lifeless machines similar to living creatures. The only creature having life is man; therefore the true definition of man is that he is a living creature.<sup>2</sup> Other philosophers do not consider human beings to be the only living creatures; they recognize fundamental distinctions

between man and other animates. Each group has paid attention to certain human characteristics. This is why man has been defined differently, such as: a thinker, an absolutist, an eternal being, an idealist, a value seeker, a metaphysician, an insatiable being, an undefinable being, a responsible being, a dedicated being, a futurist, a free being, a revolutionary, a social being, an order seeker, a hypocrite, a lover, a dutiful being, a conscious being, a being having a double conscience, a creator, a lonely being, an anxious being, a doctrinaire, a toolmaker, an imaginative being, a spiritual being, the means of the spirit and so on.

### **Is Humanity the Superstructure?**

We understand that man is a kind of animal, therefore he has many characteristics in common with the other animates. Nevertheless a series of basic differences distinguishes him from them.

Man's characteristics common with other animates together with their basic differences have given him two kinds of life, animal life and human life; in other words, materialistic life and human life; in other words, materialistic life and cultural life.

Here a question arises: what relation is there between the animality and the humanity of man? Between his animal life and his human life, between his materialistic life and his cultural and spiritual life?

Is one of the two a major principle and the other a subordinate one? Is one basic and the other a reflection of that basic principle? Is one the super-structure and the other the sub-structure? Is the materialistic life the sub-

structure and the cultural life the super-structure? Is man's animality the sub-structure and his humanity, the super-structure?

Since the question at hand has sociological aspects, not psychological ones, and is looked at sociologically, not psychologically, therefore it can be asked whether or not among the social institutions, an economic institution which is related to production and the problems involved in production, is principle and sub-structural, and the other social institutions, particularly those in which the humanity of man appear, are subordinate and super-structural, being a reflection of the economic institution? Are science, philosophy, literature, religion, law, ethics and arts reflections of economic realities in a particular era with no origin of their own?

Yes, the question at hand is looked at in this way. But whether we like it or not, this sociological issue approaches a psychological conclusion, and it is also directed towards a philosophical issue about man and his reality and essence which is today called humanism. That is to say that only the animality of man has essence, not his humanity, and this confirms the theory held by those who reject any basic distinction between man and animal.

According to this theory, not only the essence of human tendencies, including man's search for truth, his philanthropy, aestheticism, and theism are rejected, but also the possibility of his having a realistic view of the world is negated. For no view can be impartial; no view can help but reflect a particular materialistic tendency. It is strange that some of the schools of thought that hold

this view at the same time talk about humanity and humanism!

The truth is that the evolution of mankind's humanity originates from their animality and develops into humanity. This principle applies to both the individual and to society. In the beginning, man is a mere physical being, but as his essence evolves, he becomes more spiritual. The spirit of the human being originates in his physical existence and evolves towards independence. His animality acts as a nest in which his humanity grows and perfects itself.

As it is the nature of evolution that a creature, capable of attaining independence and self-existence, becomes effective and dominates its environment, the perfection of mankind's humanity, in the individual or in society, in whatever proportion it may be, leads towards independence and domination over other aspects. A perfect individual is one who dominates relatively both the internal and external environment. A perfect individual is the one liberated from both internal and external bonds, and committed to faith and belief.

Society's evolution also takes place in the same way as the evolution of the spirit in the body and the evolution of an individual's humanity from his or her animality. Human society is built upon economic institutions. Cultural and spiritual aspects of society make the soul of the society. As there is an interaction between the physical and the soul, there is also an interaction between the soul of society and its organs, that is between its cultural and materialistic institutions.<sup>3</sup> The evolution of the individual leads to freedom, independence and further

domination by the soul as does the evolution of society. That is, the further the human society evolves, the more its cultural aspects acquire further independence and domination over its materialistic aspect. The future human being will be a cultured animal, not an economic one. The future human being will be one of belief, faith, and ideology, not one of merely physical pleasures.

Of course this does not mean that human society moves towards the perfection of human values step by step in a straight line. From man's point of view human society is always one step ahead of the previous phase.

Human beings might live through a certain stage of life, in which in spite of all of their technological advances, they regress in their human aspect. As a human being, in the present century man has regressed.

This, nevertheless, means that man in his total behaviour, including both the material and the spiritual, is moving forward. Human evolution, from the point of view of spirituality is not a movement which changes direction occasionally to the left, right or even goes backward. As a whole, it is a progressive, evolutionary movement. That is why we say that the future human being is a cultured animal, not a materialistic one. The future human being is one of belief and faith, not one of carnal needs.

According to this view, because of its genuineness, the humanity in man is parallel with, or even ahead of his technical evolution and because of that he has gradually lost his dependence on and impressionability with his natural and social environment. He has increased his independence which means an ensuring dependence on

belief and ideology and as a result, his effectiveness in controlling his natural and social environment has increased. In the future, he should gain more spiritual freedom, meaning independence, attachment to belief, faith, and ideology. Man, in the past, had scarcely used nature and his own innate gifts, and he had been more of a servant to nature and a slave of his own animality. But the future human being, while making more use of nature and his own gifts, will relatively free himself from his animal instincts and will increase his domination over himself and nature.

According to this view, man's reality, although developing with and under the domain of his animal-materialistic evolution, neither reflects, nor depends on his materialistic evolution. It is an independent and evolving reality. It affects the materialistic aspects and at the same time is affected by them. What makes the final destiny of human beings is the evolutionary process of their culture and the essential reality of their humanity, not the evolution of technology. What progresses is the essential human reality of man which perfects his means of production alongside the other aspects of life as he himself goes on evolving and it is not the means of production that perfects man along its course of evolution.

#### **The Relation Between Science and Faith**

We have seen the relation between the humanity of man and his animality, in other words the relation between one's cultural and spiritual life and that of one's materialistic life. It is clear that humanity in man is genuine and independent, not a mere reflection of his animal life.

It is also clear that faith and science are the two basic constituents of the humanity of man. Now we want to investigate the kind of relationship, if any, between these two constituents or aspects of humanity.

In Christianity, because of some misinterpreted passages of the Old Testament, an opinion, unfortunately, has found general acceptance that has cost [science and faith] a great deal. This has originated in *Genesis*.

In the second chapter, verses sixteen and seventeen of *Genesis* about Adam, Paradise and the Forbidden Tree it is said:

*And Jehovah God also laid this command upon Man: 'From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of knowledge of good and evil you must not eat from it, for on the day you eat from it, you will surely die.'*

In the third chapter, verses 1 through 8, it says:

*Now the serpent proved to be the most subtle of all the wild beasts of the field that Jehovah God had made. So it began to say to the woman: "Is it really so that God has said that you must not eat from everything in the garden?" At this the woman said to the serpent: "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat. But as for eating of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You must not eat from it. No. You must not touch it lest you die.' "*

*At this, the serpent said to the woman: "You surely will not die. For God knows that in the very day of your eating from it, your eyes shall be opened and you shall be like God, knowing good and evil."*

*Consequently the woman saw that the tree was good*

*for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes. Yes, the tree was desirable. So she began taking of its fruit and eating it. Afterward she gave some also to her husband with her and he began eating it. Then the eyes of both of them opened and they knew that they were naked. Hence they sewed fig leaves together and made loin coverings for themselves.*

In verse 23 of the same chapter it says:

*With that Jehovah God put him out of the garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from which he had been taken.*

According to this interpretation of man, God and sin, God's will (religion) is that man should not possess the knowledge of good and evil and should not become fully aware. The Forbidden Tree is the tree of knowledge. The sinful human being, by disobeying God's will (by disobeying the prophets and God's commands) gains knowledge and wisdom and therefore is driven out of God's Paradise. According to this interpretation, all temptations are temptations of knowledge, so the tempting devil is this wisdom.

As we Muslims have learned from the Quran, God taught Adam all the "Names" (facts) and then commanded the angels to bow down to him. Satan was driven out of God's domain because he did not bow down to God's vicegerent, who was aware of the facts. Tradition has taught us that the Forbidden Tree was something like greediness, avarice and the like, that which belongs to man's animality, not to his humanity. The tempting devil always draws people away from wisdom and tempts them with animalistic desires, and what represents the devil in man is his concupiscence, not his wisdom. Yes,

to us, who have learned this, what comes in *Genesis* is a new revelation.

It is this same interpretation that divides the history of civilization in Europe into the era of faith and the era of science in the last 15 centuries and puts science in opposition to faith.

On the other hand, the history of Islamic civilization is divided into the Golden Age, which is the era of science and faith, and the era of decline, in which science and faith have both declined. We Muslims should avoid such false interpretations which have caused irreparable damage to science, faith and humanity, as opposed to faith.

Now we intend to analyze this issue and from a scientific approach see whether these two components of humanity, faith and knowledge, belong to a certain era. Is man doomed to remain half-human all the time and in each era have only half of his humanity? Is he always doomed to one of the two misfortunes: misfortune resulting from ignorance and lack of knowledge, or that resulting from lack of faith?

It will be seen clearly later on that each faith, one way or another, is based on a certain way of thinking and a particular interpretation of the world and existence. Without doubt, many of the interpretations about the world, although they may form a basis for faith and attachment to it, are not in accordance with logical, scientific principles and are inevitably rejected. This is not the issue. The question is whether there is a kind of view and interpretation of the world and a kind of interpretation of existence which could be supported by science, philosophy and logic and could also be a firm

basis for a living faith?

If it can be proved that such an interpretation, thought, and view exist, then man would not be doomed to one of the two misfortunes.

In relation to faith and science one can discuss this from two points of view. One is whether there is an interpretation which would increase ones faith and ideals and at the same time be logical. The other is whether all thoughts which science and philosophy inspire, are against faith, hope and optimism? This is the question we shall tackle later on under the title of *A World View*.

The second aspect is the influence of science upon man on the one hand, and faith on the other. Does science lead man to one thing and faith to something else, opposite to one another? Does science intend to make something else? Does science drag us to one side and faith to another? Are science and faith complementary to each other, science forming half and faith the other half accordingly? Let us see what science and faith give us.

Science gives us power and enlightenment, and faith gives love, hope and warmth. Science creates technology and faith creates purpose. Science provides us with momentum and faith with direction. Science is ability and faith is good-will. Science shows us what there is while faith inspires us as to what to do. Science is the external revolution and faith is the internal one. Science makes the world humane and faith elevates the human spirit. Science expands man horizontally, and faith promotes him vertically. Science re-shapes nature, and faith moulds man. Both science and faith give power to mankind. What science gives to human beings is detached strength,

but what faith gives to them is an attached strength. Both science and faith are beauty, science being the beauty of wisdom and faith being the beauty of spirit. Science, as well as faith, gives man security against anxieties, loneliness, helplessness, and absurdities. Science harmonizes man with the self.

The human need for faith and science has completely occupied the minds of learned scholars, irrespective of their being religious or irreligious. The scholar, Muhammad Iqbal Lahouri believes:

"Humanity needs three things today: a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and a set of principles universally upheld which would explain the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis. Modern Europe, has no doubt, built idealistic systems on these lines, but experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why thought alone has influenced man so little while religion has always elevated individuals, and transformed whole societies. The result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich. Believe me, Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement. The Muslim, on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideas resulting from a revelation, which coming from the inmost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externity. With him or her, the spiritual basis of life is a matter of conviction for which even the least enlightened person among us can

easily lay down his life."<sup>4</sup>

Will Durant, the well-known writer of *The History of Civilization*, in spite of his being non-religious, believes, "The difference between the ancient world and the modern industrialized world is a difference of means and not of ends...What if all our progress is an improvement in methods, but not in purposes?"<sup>5</sup> He adds:

"Our wealth is a weariness, and our wisdom is a little light that chills; but love warms the heart with unspeakable solace."<sup>6</sup>

Today, it is generally believed that science and purely scientific education are unable to make perfect human beings. They only partially humanize humanity. The product of such an education is human material, not a perfect human being. They make human beings powerful and capable but not virtuous. This kind of education makes a one-dimensional, not a multi-dimensional person. Today, everybody realizes that the age of science alone is over and a lack of moral values threatens society. In our country, also, a call to humanistic culture and particularly mystic literature, such as that of Moulavi, Saadi, and Hafiz has come into favor to make up for this lack of ideals, unaware of the fact that the attraction and spirit of this kind of literature are also inspired by religion.

The humanistic spirit of this kind of literature is derived from that of the very religious, Islamic spirit. This is why some of today's modern literature is so dull and unattractive, in spite of all the humanistic pretension that there is to it.

Our mystic literature originates from a certain way of thinking about the world and mankind which is the es-

sence of Islamic thought. If the Islamic spirit is taken from these literary master-pieces, what is left is only nonsense.

Will Durant is one of those who realize this emptiness and suggest literature, philosophy and art as remedies. He proposes "Our schools and colleges have suffered severely from Spencer's conception of education as the adjustment of the individual to his environment; it was a dead, mechanical definition, drawn from a mechanical philosophy, and distasteful to every creative spirit. The result has been the conquest of our schools by mechanical and theoretical science, to the comparative exclusion of such "useless" subjects as literature, history, philosophy and art. An education that is purely scientific makes a mere tool of its product; it leaves a person a stranger to beauty, and gives that person powers that are divorced from wisdom. It would have been better for the world if Spencer had never written on education."<sup>7</sup>

Although Will Durant confesses that this gap, in the first place, is a gap in the area of goals, ends, and ideals, a gap which has led to absurdity; although he agrees that this gap is a gap in a certain way of thinking and a certain faith in human goals and intentions; with all this, it is strange that he believes that it can be compensated for by some kind of spirituality, even if it does not go beyond the imagination. He believes that interest in history, art, beauty, poetry and music can fill this gap which arises from the depth of man's idealistic and perfectionist nature.

#### **Substitution of Science for Faith and Vice Versa**

We have come to realize that not only are science

and faith not contradictory, but that they are complementary to one another. Now another question arises: Is it possible that these two can be substitutes for each other?

Having realized what the functions of science and faith are, there will be no need to ask this question. It is clear that science cannot be substituted for faith in giving us enlightenment and ability, love and hope, to promote the level of our desires, to change our goals and ideals which are naturally and instinctively based on individuality and selfishness; instead, giving us goals and ideals which are based on love and spiritual interests. In addition to being a tool in our hands, these goals and ideals change our essence and our nature. Belief cannot be a substitute for science to make nature known to us, to discover the natural rules for us and to help us know ourselves.

History has proved that the separation of science and faith has caused irreparable damage. Faith must be recognized through science. Faith remains safe from superstitions through the enlightenment of science. Faith without science results in fanaticism and stagnation, getting us nowhere. Where there is no science and knowledge, faith in naive followers becomes an instrument in the hands of clever charlatans. Several examples of these can be found among the opportunists at the dawn of Islam and other epochs.

Science without faith is like a sword in the hand of a drunkard. It is like a light in the hand of a midnight thief enabling him to steal the best merchandise. This is why today's unbelieving learned man is not the slightest

bit different from yesterday's unbelieving, ignorant man, in his nature and behaviour. What difference is there between today's Churchills, Johnsons, Nixons, Stalins and yesterday's Pharaohs, Ghenghis Khans and Attilas?

It may be asked, "Is not science enlightenment as well as power?" The enlightenment and advance of science do not relate solely to the external world. They enlighten us and show us our internal world, and, consequently, enable us to change this. Therefore, science can improve both the world and mankind, and so it fulfills both its own duty (improving the world) and also the duty of faith (improving mankind). The answer is that both are correct, but the point is that power and ability are means, that is, they are used according to the will and the command of man. Wherever a human being intends to accomplish something, he or she can do it better through science. That is why we say science is mankind's best companion in reaching the goals and fulfilling aims.

But the problem is something else. The problem is that before using means, man has specified his goal. Means are always used in reaching goals. How have the goals appeared? Man, as an animal of instinct, in whom humanness is an acquired quality, that is, in whom human talents develop gradually through faith, moves naturally towards materialistic and egotistical ends and uses means for the same purpose.

That is why man needs a kind of power which would not be as his tools or goals, but which would be able to manipulate him as a tool in its own direction. He needs a stimulus to create an internal revolution in him and give him new direction. This cannot be done either by

science or by laws governing man and nature. Such stimuli arise from changes in his soul which render spiritual values sacred for him and this in turn, is the consequence of a series of sublime inclinations which are themselves the result of certain thoughts and interpretations about the universe and mankind which can be neither acquired in laboratories nor by any deductive or rationalistic arguments. These interpretations are the ones which are not available to science, as we will see later on.

Past and present history has proved that the separation of faith and science can have a terrible outcome. Wherever there has been faith but no science, people's humanitarian efforts have been made in ways which have not always been adequate or even favourable, and sometimes have caused fanaticism, prejudices and destructive clashes. Mankind's past history is full of these incidents.

Wherever there has been science and no sign of faith, as in some of the present day societies, all the power of science has been used to satisfy selfishness, egotism, expansionism, ambition, exploitation, subjugation, deception and deceitfulness.

The past two or three centuries could be considered the era of science-worship and deviation from faith. Many scientists believed that all human problems could be tackled through science, but experience proved otherwise. Today, you cannot find a thinker who would deny man's need for some kind of faith, even if it is a non-religious one which in any case would be above science. Bertrand Russell, although he has materialistic inclinations, confesses, "Work of which the motive is solely pecuniary

cannot have this value, but only work which embodies some kind of devotion, whether to persons, to things, or merely to a vision."<sup>8</sup>

Today, even the materialists have to admit that philosophically we are materialists and morally we are idealists. That is to say that theoretically we are materialistic, and scientifically we are idealistic and spiritual. The problem of how it is possible for man to be theoretically materialistic and practically spiritual remains for the materialists to answer.

George Sarton, the world famous scientist and the author of the well-known book *The History of Science*, in his other book *Six Wings, Men of Science* states that man's inadequacy and his immediate need for faith is as follows: "Science has had great and marvelous advancements in certain areas, but in some other areas, like national or international policies which concern human relations, we still scorn ourselves."<sup>9</sup>

George Sarton confesses that the kind of faith man needs is the religious type. As to this need for the triangle of art, religion and science, he says, "Art reveals beauty, thus creating happiness in life. Religion gives love and is the music of life. Science deals with truth, righteousness and reason thus causing mankind to be intelligent. We are in need of all three, art, religion, and science. Pure science is necessary in life but it is never sufficient by itself."<sup>10</sup>

### Religious Faith

According to what was discussed in the previous chapters, man cannot live a good life or achieve anything

useful for mankind and human civilization without having beliefs, ideals and faith. Any individual who lacks ideals and faith will become either a thoroughly selfish person who does not see anything but his own personal interests, or an irresolute, wavering being who does not recognize his duties toward life, or moral and social values. Man constantly confronts moral and social problems and has to respond accordingly. If a person is associated with a school of thought, ideology and faith, his or her position is clear. But, if that person is not disciplined by a school of thought and a religion, he or she will constantly remain irresolute and will occasionally be pulled in many different directions. He or she will become an aimless being. Yes, there is no doubt in the principle of the need to join a school of thought and an ideology.

What must be taken into consideration is that only religious faith can make man a true believer; only faith allows him to overcome selfishness and egotism through faith and ideology and to create a kind of "devoutness" and "conviction" in individuals, by which they accept fully even the minor issues of their ideology. At the same time a person holds his faith so dear and precious that life without it would become absurd and meaningless. Therefore he will support it with zeal and fidelity.

Strong religious beliefs cause man to struggle against his natural, individual inclinations and man may sacrifice his life and his prestige for his beliefs. This is possible only when man considers his beliefs sacred and gains absolute control of himself. It is only religious power which is able to sanctify beliefs and allow man to be completely ruled by them.

Sometimes, not because of religious faith, but under great psychological pressure, hatred, revenge, or reaction against oppression and cruelty, people sacrifice their lives, their property and their honour, many examples of which can be found around the world.

But the difference between a religious idea and a non-religious idea is that wherever there is a religious belief to sanctify the idea, sacrifices are made quite willingly and naturally. There is a difference between what is done with willingness and faith which is a kind of choice and that which is done under great psychological pressure.

Secondly if man's outlook is merely a materialistic one exclusively based on perceptive reality, any social and human idealism is contrary to perceptive realities which people observe in their relation with the universe. "What results from a sensory out-look is egotism, not idealism. If idealism is not based on an out-look whose logical result is that idea, it will not go beyond illusion, that is man has to devise a world separated from the existing realities with his illusions and be happy with this. If idealism originates in religion, it will be based on a kind of out-look whose logical result is following social ideas and ideals. Religious faith is a congenial link between man and the general ideals of the world. Non-religious ideas and ideals, on the other hand, are a kind of "separation" from the world and result in making an imaginary world for oneself which is in no way supported by the real world."<sup>11</sup>

It is not that religious faith dictates a series of duties contrary to people's natural inclinations, but it changes the perspective of the world in their eyes. It introduces

factors different from the ones perceptible in the world. It changes the bleak, mechanical, materialistic world into a living, animate, conscious world. Religious faith changes their interpretation of the world and creation. William James, the famous American philosopher and psychologist of the early 20th century believes, "The world interpreted religiously is not the materialistic world over again, with an altered expression, a natural constitution different at some point, that which a materialistic world would have."

Apart from this, there is a natural inclination in all men towards certain sacred truths and entities. Man is the center of a series of non-materialistic potential talents and inclinations which can be developed. Man's inclinations are not inclusively materialistic, and spiritual inclinations are not merely inculcated and acquired. This is a fact confirmed by science. William James suggests, "So far as our ideal impulses originate in this region (and most of them do originate in it, for we find them possessing us in a way for which we cannot articulately account).<sup>12</sup>

Because they exist, these tendencies must be trained and if they are not trained properly and used correctly, they take a wrong course and cause incredible damage, such as the worshipping of idols, of man, nature and thousands of other objects of idolatry. All this is the effect of deviation from the correct path.

Erich Fromm believes, "There is nobody who is not in need of a religion, and does not want regulations for his guidance and a subject for his love and interest. He might not be aware of his religious beliefs as something different from his total beliefs and, on the contrary, he may even

think that he has no religion and consider his love and interest for apparently non-religious ends such as power, wealth and happiness only the sign of his interest in practical affairs and in accord with the opportunity. The question is not whether one has or has not any religion, but which religion he practices."<sup>13</sup>

What this psychologist means is that man cannot live without the need to sanctify and adore something; for example, if an individual does not believe in Almighty God, that person will consider something else as the ultimate truth and will make it the subject of his or her faith and worship.

Since it is inevitable for man to have an ideology and faith and since religious faith is the only faith which can truly influence man and satisfy his natural inclination towards sacred truths and entities, there is no way for him but to embrace religious faith.

The Glorious Quran is the first book to consider religious faith as a kind of harmony with the divinity:

*Seek they other than the religion of God, when unto Him submits whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him they will be returned. (3:83)*

It also considers religious faith an element of human nature:

*So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright – the nature (framed) of God, in which He has created man . . . (30:30)*

### **The Effects and Benefits of Faith**

Although the effects of religious faith have to a certain

extent come to light in our discussion so far, in order to fully understand the truly beneficial effects of this valuable property of life and this spiritual possession we will discuss this issue in detail.

Tolstoy, the Russian thinker believes, "Belief is what people live with." The philosopher, Nasser Khosrow Alavi says to his son:

"I turned to religion from the world because:  
To me, without religion, prison and dungeon  
would be the world.

O son, religion is a world in my heart,  
This one is in no way a destructable world."

Religious faith has tremendous positive effects, from the point of creating joy and happiness, or bettering social relations or decreasing and eliminating difficulties which are inevitable in the world system. Now we will explain the effects of religious faith in three sections.

### **First, Joy and Happiness**

The first effect of religious faith, from the point of creating joy and happiness is optimism: optimism towards the universe. It represents creation as something which has goals — goals which are blessed, evolutionary and rich — and naturally gives man an optimistic outlook towards the whole of creation and the rules governing it. The position of the believer in the world is like that of an individual living in a country who considers the laws, orders and organizations of that country to be correct and just. He also believes in the good will of the principal leaders of that country. Naturally he finds the groundwork

for progress and promotion available to himself and everybody else. He believes that the only thing that might hinder him would be his own laziness and inexperience or that of the other dutiful and responsible people.

In the view of such a person the responsibility for any hindrance lies with himself and not with the organizations and systems of the country. He knows that he and his like are also responsible for whatever deficiency results from their not having fulfilled their obligations and responsibility. This naturally inspires him to work optimistically.

But an unbeliever in the world is like a person living in a country who considers the laws and institutions of that country corrupt and cruel, while he has no choice but to accept them. Such an individual is full of contradictions and hatred. He never thinks of reforming the self, but thinks that since the whole universe is incompatible and full of cruelty, tyranny and dishonesty, what can one insignificant honest person like himself do? Such an individual never enjoys his or her life because the world is always a horrible prison. This is why the Holy Quran says:

*But he who turneth away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life... (20:124)*

Yes, it is the faith of man that broadens the spirituality of his life and saves him from depression. The second effect of religious faith from the point of creating cheerfulness and happiness is enlightenment in the heart. When man, because of religious faith, finds the universe enlightened by the divine rays of truth, such an enlightenment brightens the spirit, acting as a torch lit

in one's conscience. This is contrary to an unbeliever to whom the universe is absurd, dark, incomprehensible and empty of insight and clarity. Because of this, that person is imprisoned in the dark world of his own creation.

The third out-come of religious faith, from the point of creating cheerfulness and happiness is "hope" for the good results of good action.

From the materialistic point of view, the universe is indifferent and impartial towards people, regardless of their course of action: whether they act in the direction of right or wrong, of justice or oppression, of integrity or deceitfulness. The result of their action depends on one thing only and that is the "amount of their effort".

From the point of view of a believer, though, the universe is not indifferent towards the effort of these two groups. The universe does not react equally towards these two, but the divine system supports the people who struggle for righteousness, truth, integrity, justice and good will.

*O ye who believe! If you help God's cause, He will make your foot-hold firm. (47:7)*

*For surely God does not waste the reward of those who do good. (12:90)*

The fourth out-come of religious faith, from the point of creating joy and happiness is peace of mind. It is in the nature of man to seek happiness for himself. He takes great pleasure in the thought of reaching this state; and the thought of a gloomy, deprived future disturbs him and fills him with anxiety and worry.

The causes of his happiness are:

1. Effort

## 2. Confidence in circumstantial conditions

A student's success depends on two factors: his own effort and hard work, on the one hand, and the school atmosphere, that is the encouragement and the effectiveness of the school authorities, on the other. If a studious pupil has no faith in the school that he studies in, if he has no confidence in the teacher who grades him at the end of the academic year and if he anxiously anticipates unjust treatment, throughout the whole year he will be full of anxiety, torment and fear.

The duty of man toward the self is clear. From his own side, he does not worry, because anxiety and fear are caused by uncertainty and doubt. Man has no doubt about what is related to himself. What pulls a person towards uncertainty and doubt is his duty towards the universe which is unclarified.

Is good work useful? Are honesty and trustworthiness useless? In spite of all efforts and fulfilment of responsibilities, is the final result suffering? This is where anxiety appears in its most horrible form.

Those who have formed a relationship with the universe, through religious faith, are given trust and confidence. Anxiety and fear in dealing with the universe are removed and replaced by comfort and ease. This is why we say that one of the effects of religious faith is peace of mind.

Another result of religious faith, from the point of creating happiness, is the benefit from a series of joys which are called spiritual pleasures. Man has two kinds of joy: one belongs to his senses, created by a kind of contact between a sensory perception and an external object, such

as the joy which results through the mouth by tasting, and through the sense of touch by physical contact. The other is the kind of joy which is related to the depth of one's spirit and conscience, and has nothing to do with any specific organs; joys which do not result from contact with any external matter. Joy of this kind is that which man gains from generosity and helpfulness, or from popularity and respect, as well as from his own and his child's success. This kind of joy has nothing to do with the senses and is not affected directly by an external factor.

Spiritual joys are not only stronger than materialistic joys, but they last longer too. The joy of worshipping God and the joy of prayer is of this kind. The mystics, whose worship is modest, receive the greatest amount of pleasure from their prayers. In religious terminology they talk about "the sweetness of faith". Faith has a sweetness superior to all others. Spiritual joy is increased when acts such as acquiring knowledge, generosity, helpfulness, success and victory initiate from religious faith, and all are performed for God in the area of 'worship'.

#### **Second, the Function of Faith in the Betterment of Social Relations**

Man, like some other animates, is born instinctively social. An individual is not capable of satisfying his needs alone. Life must be shared with others who participate in all duties and creativity, and a kind of work-distribution should be established among them, as there is among other animates such as bees, with one essential difference. That is, work-distribution among non-human beings is

instinctive and compulsory by nature, the possibility of disobedience or violation being absent, contrary to man who is a being with a free will and should perform work freely, as a "duty and responsibility". In other words, the non-human animate beings are under the influence of innate social instincts. Human needs are social without being governed by instincts. Human social instincts, as a series of "drives", exist in the subconscience of man and they must be cultivated through education.

A healthy social life is that in which individuals respect each other's rights, rules and restrictions; consider justice sacred and offer love to each other. They want for others what they want for themselves; they want not for others what they do not want for themselves; they believe and trust in each other. The guarantee of their mutual confidence is their spiritual values. Each individual considers himself responsible and under obligation to his society. Every individual shows the same virtue and chastity whether in private or in the open. They help one another without having the slightest sense of greed; they move against oppression and tyranny and do not allow dictators and agents of evil to engage in tyranny and corruption. They hold dear moral values and are allied and united like the members of a single body.

What, more than religious faith respects righteousness, holds justice sacred, softens hearts towards each other, establishes mutual confidence between individuals, causes virtue and chastity to deepen their roots in the conscience of human beings, gives credit to moral values, creates the courage to make a move against cruelty and unites everybody like members of a single body.

The glories of mankind, which glitter like stars in the sky of their adventurous history, are those whose source is religious faith.

### **Third, Relief from Distress**

Human life, whether we like it or not, has its pangs, sorrows, failures, losses, bitterness, and disappointments, as it has its joys, sweetness, achievements and successes. Many of life's sorrows can be either prevented or removed though often with great effort. Obviously, man is obliged to struggle with nature and change the bitterness to sweetness. Some of the events in the world, though, cannot be prevented or removed, like the advance of old age. Man, at any rate, ages. The candle of his life burns down. The consequences of old age, such as weakness and physical inadequacy and the like hinder activities. Moreover, the thought of death, leaving life behind, leaving the world or family and friends causes people to suffer in different ways.

Religious faith creates the power to resist in man and turns bitterness to sweetness. A man of faith knows that everything in the world is under a certain law and if he reacts towards bitterness properly, Almighty God will compensate him in one way or another, even if the incident seems incompensatable. Because old age does not mean the end of life, and moreover, an individual with faith always occupies himself or herself with intimacy and praying to God, life in old age becomes more delightful than the period of youth for believers. The prospect of death is different in the eyes of a person with faith than in the eyes of an individual without faith. To a

believer death is not mortality but a transfer from a transitory world to a permanent one, from a finite world to an infinite one. Death is a transfer from the world of action and cultivation to a world of consequence and harvest. This is why such an individual removes his or her fear of death by efforts in doing good or *amal-i-saleh* as it is said in religious terminology.

It is obvious and clear to psychologists that most of the mental illnesses which are caused by psychological disorders and bitterness towards life are found among non-religious people. Religious people, depending on the extent of their steadfastness in their religious faith, are protected against such illness. Therefore, one of the consequences of contemporary life, whose source is loss of religious faith, is the increase in psychological and nervous illnesses.

### **A School of Thought or Ideology**

What is a school of thought or ideology and how can it be defined. What makes it necessary for man as an individual or as a member of society to follow a school of thought and accept an ideology and have faith in it? Is an ideology necessary for man or society? An introduction is needed here.

Man has two kinds of actions: pleasure oriented actions and goal-directed actions.

Pleasure-oriented actions are the same simple actions that people do as a direct result of their instincts, their nature and/or their habits — habits being man's second nature — to reach a certain pleasure or avoid a certain pain. For example, a person gets thirsty and reaches for

a glass of water; a person sees a stinging insect and runs away from it; a person feels like having a cigarette and lights one.

These reactions are in accordance with one's wishes and are directly related to pleasure and pain. A pleasure-oriented action pulls a person with a certain attraction and a painful action repels one with a certain repulsive force.

Goal-directed actions are those which have no attraction or repulsion in themselves and man's nature or instinct does not attract him toward these actions or repel him from them. But people according to their own judgement and because of the good within the action itself or the good in avoiding it, perform these actions or refrain from doing them. That is, man's first cause and stimulus is the good in them not pleasure. Pleasure attracts people by nature and goodness attracts through wisdom. Pleasure stimulates drives and goodness stimulates will. Man enjoys doing pleasure-oriented activities but the thought of taking one step toward the ultimate goodness — which is the good, perfection or some kind of pleasure in the future — brings happiness. There is difference between an action which gives pleasure and joy and an action which not only gives pleasure but may even cause pain, but at the same time gives contentment. Pleasure and pain are common in both human beings and animals, but contentment and consent or aversion and discontent are human characteristics, as having wishes is specifically a human characteristic. Contentment, aversion and wishes belong to the contemplative existence of man and not to one's sensory perception.

We said that human beings fulfill their goal-directed activities through their wisdom and will, in contrast to their pleasure-oriented activities which take place through their senses and drives. To be fulfilled through intellect and will means that the power of contemplation in their intellect anticipates remote goodness, perfection of pleasure, and devises the way to get to it, which may be a difficult one. To be fulfilled by the power of will means that in man there is a power dependent on the intellect which functions as the executor of the decisions reached through the intellect, and possibly executes the decisions oppressed by the intellect, even if they are contrary to desires, attractions and natural drives.

A student is pulled towards laziness, gluttony, comfort, passion and fun, while his or her intellect, which evaluates the corruption of such actions on the one hand, and the result of being conscientious, studious and giving up passions and pleasures on the other hand, makes him or her choose the second for his or her own good. At this time people prefer the command of wisdom, which is to their good, to the command of their nature, which is pleasure-seeking. The same is true for a patient who suffers from taking bitter, unpleasant tasting medicine and hates taking it but his intellect and his reason, which govern his drives make him do so.

The stronger the wisdom and will, the stronger their influence upon the nature of man, despite his natural drives. Human beings in their goal-directed actions, always put into action a plan a theory. The more a person develops in the realm of intellect and will, the more his actions become goal-directed, rather than pleasure-

oriented; and the closer he is to the animal realm, the more pleasure oriented rather than goal-directed his actions become because animal activities are all pleasure-oriented. Among animals we might see activities which are meant for future goals and results, such as making nests, immigration, mating and reproduction. None of these, however, take place consciously, with awareness of goals, with deliberation about finding the way and with choice of tools; but they take place instinctively and with a certain innate inspiration. The realm of activity of man from the point of his goal-directed activities, expands to the point that it dominates pleasure-oriented activities too. That is, prudent projects may be planned so precisely as to involve pleasure, and any pleasure, while being a pleasure, might be a means to an end as well in some cases. And any natural action, while being a response to natural stimulus, would be following the command of wisdom as well. If the goal-directed activities dominate pleasure-oriented activities and if pleasure oriented activities become a part of a total and general goal-directed plan in life, then, nature corresponds with intellect and drive corresponds with will.

Goal-directed activities, because of being directed by a series of remote goals and ends, will necessitate a plan, a project, and a manner and choice of means for reaching these ends. To the extent that it is a person, that is, an individual who decides for himself, the person's intellect is the planner, the theoretician and the indicator of the way, the manner and the tools, which, of course, depend on the amount of knowledge, information, profits and power of judgement.

Goal-directed activities, even though they reach their peak of perfection, are not by themselves worthy of man. Such actions are in fact an essential condition for man, because half of what comprises man are such faculties as wisdom, knowledge, information and reason. But these alone are not sufficient. Such actions are worthy of man only when in addition to being based on reason and will power they are in accordance with man's sublime tendencies or, at least, they are not contradictory to them; otherwise, the most criminal human activities might take place with expedience, intelligence, foresight, plan, and thought. Evil, exploiting plans are the best attestors of this claim. In Islamic terminology, whenever the power of expedience deviates from sublime tendencies and faith, and serves the material and carnal ends, that power is called (*nakra*) mischievousness, and (*sheytanat*), devilishness. Regardless of the fact that goal-directed activities are not necessarily humanistic, if they are based on carnal ends, they are more dangerous than pleasure-oriented activities. For example, an animal kills another animal or a human being to alleviate its hunger, while a rational calculating human being, for a similar need, destroys cities and burns to death hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

Now, are the rational goals adequate for the individual's total well-being? In other words, what is the limit of effectiveness of individual rationality from the point of contributing to the individual's well-being? There is no question about the fact that the power of intellect and thought is necessary and useful for limited and trivial decisions. Man in this life is always faced with decisions

such as selecting companions, selecting a field of education, selecting a spouse, selecting a career, travelling, association, recreation, charitable activities, fighting deceit and dishonesty, etc. . . . No doubt in all these activities man needs to think and reason, and the more and the better he thinks, the more successful he will be; he will probably have to call for others' ideas and experiences (principle of consultation). In all these trivial cases, man makes plans and carries them out.

Is man capable of laying out a general plan encompassing all the 'problems of his personal life; so extensive a plan as to include his total well-being? Or, is a person's power of thinking and planning limited to trivial problems only, one's domination over the total life happiness, which includes multi-lateral happiness, out of the reach of one's powers of thinking?

We know that some philosophers believe in such "self-sufficiency" and claim to have found the way to adversity and happiness, relying on their wisdom and will in reaching happiness.

On the other hand, no two philosophers can be found in the world who would agree on the same method of finding this way. Happiness itself, which is the final goal and which at first seems to be a clear and evident concept proves to be one of the most ambiguous concepts. The question as to what happiness is, and how it can be achieved and what unhappiness is, and what its factors are, are still left unanswered. Why? For even today man himself, his abilities and potentialities are not as yet fully known and understood. How could it be possible that man himself remain unknown while his happiness

be known together with the means of obtaining it?

Moreover, man is a social being. Social life creates thousands of problems and intricacies for him and he has to solve all of them and take a stand against them. Also, because man is a social being, his happiness, ideals, criteria for good and bad, ways and manners, and choice of tools, are intermingled with those of others. One has to seek one's happiness in a thoroughfare which provides happiness and perfection for society.

The problem will become increasingly more complicated if we take into consideration such question as eternal life and the everlasting nature of the soul and the lack of experience on the side of reason regarding life after death.

This is where the need for a school of thought and an ideology becomes evident, that there is the need for a general theory, a comprehensive, harmonious, solid plan whose main objective is man's perfection and the happiness of all; and in which the main aims and methods, musts and must nots, the good and the bad, means and ends, needs, pains and remedies and responsibilities and duties are clearly defined and is the source of inspiration in respect to the duties and responsibilities of everybody.

From the beginning, or at least from the time of the growth and expansion of social life which caused a series of discrepancies, man has been in need of an ideology — or according to the Quran, a Divine Law (*shar'iah*).<sup>14</sup> With the passing of time and the expansion of mankind, this need became more vital. In the past, kinship, social, tribal and national inclinations governed human societies as a collective soul. This kind of soul, in turn, created a

series of collective ideals, although they might have been non-human ideals, and gave society unity and direction. Expansion and perfection of science and wisdom have weakened those relations. Because of its intrinsic nature, science weakens sentiments and sentimental attachments. What gives the people of the present world — and even more so of the future — common unity, common direction and common ideals and becomes the criterion for the good and bad, the musts and must nots is a consciously chosen philosophy of life which offers man ideals based on logic; in other words a comprehensive, perfect ideology.

Man today is more in need of such a philosophy than man of previous times; a philosophy which is capable of giving him attachment to the facts beyond himself and his personal interests. Today there remains no question about the need for a school of thought or an ideology being essential to social life.

Who has the ability to plan and establish such an ideology? No doubt an individual's intellect is not capable of doing so. Is the group intellect able to do so? Has man the ability to plan and devise such an ideology by applying his past and present knowledge and experiences? If we consider man as the most complex problem, we should consider human society and one's social happiness a fortiori a much more complex problem. What can be done, then? Here is where if we have a correct concept about the universe and creation, if we consider creation the true and if we deny absurdity in the universe, then we can admit that creation has not neglected this great need and its milestones are indicated through revelation (*vaḥy*) and from a transcendental viewpoint which goes beyond

one's wisdom (the principle of prophecy). Then wisdom and science should follow the main lines so indicated. How beautifully Avicinna has expressed this in his book *Salvation*, where he explains mankind's need for a divine religion and prophet.

That is, while creation has not ignored the slight, non-essential needs, how can it ignore the most essential ones?

If, however, we lack true insight into the universe and the creation, we should accept that we are doomed to bewilderment and loss, and any plan or ideology devised by the bewildered human being in this dark world of nature is nothing but diversion and confusion.

What is said above not only explains the necessity for the existence of an ideology but also the necessity for accepting or having one. The individual's need to accept an ideology, though, becomes reality only when it appears as "faith" and faith is a reality which can not happen by force or for material interests. One may surrender to something by force, but one cannot submit to an ideology. An ideology has to be accepted and absorbed: Ideology calls for faith.

A constructive ideology should, on the one hand, be based on a certain philosophy which can satisfy reason and nourish thought; and on the other hand it should derive such aims from its philosophy which would prove attractive to its followers. It is only under such conditions that love and intellectual satisfaction which are the two fundamental elements of faith, will unite to make this world.

There are a few things to be discussed briefly at this point. We shall discuss them in detail later on.

First, there are two kinds of ideologies: Universal

ideologies and group ideologies. Universal ideologies are those which are addressed to mankind in general, not to a specific nation, race, or social class. They are intended to save mankind, not just a specific group or class. The plan they offer includes all mankind, not a specific group. The supporters they attract are from all classes, groups and nations, not from a specific class or group.

Group ideology, on the contrary, is addressed to a specific group or class and is intended to free and save or cause the domination and supremacy of the group to which it is addressed. The plans it offers are specific to that group. Naturally such an ideology will be accepted and supported by that very group only.

Each of these two kinds of ideology is based on a certain perception of man. A general, universal ideology, such as the Islamic ideology, has a certain understanding about man which is defined as his "divine nature". From the Islamic point of view, human beings in the process of creation, prior to being affected by historical and social factors, have gained a certain dimension in their existence and have been given superior qualities which distinguish them from animals and give them identity. According to this view, human beings, in the context of creation have enjoyed a common intelligence and conscience which exist in all human beings and the same innate conscience has given them a superior position among other species and has given them the merit to be called upon and be addressed to, to move and to act. These ideologies which are based on the innate conscience which is peculiar to mankind, begin their call and create movement.

Some ideologies hold a different view about man. From their point of view, mankind is not at a level to be called upon or to be addressed to or to move [towards God], because one's intelligence, conscience and tendencies are indicated with regard to the influence of social factors in one's social class. Human beings, *per se*, regardless of specific historical or social factors, have neither the intelligence, nor conscience, nor merit to be called upon and addressed, but they are abstract beings, not concrete ones. Marxism, and also other national and trivial ideologies are based on such a view of mankind. The *raison d'être* of such ideologies is the group interests or racial and national sentiments or, at most national culture.

Without doubt the Islamic ideology is of the first type and its origin is man's divine nature. That is why Islam addresses *al-nas*, all mankind, not a specific class or group.<sup>15</sup> Islam has actually been able to attract supporters and followers from all groups, even from those it has fought against, i.e., according to the Quran, the *mala*, aristocrats and the *motraf*, rich. Making people of a certain class fight against their own group, even causing an individual to revolt against his own corruption is what Islam has done extensively during its history. Islam, because of its being a religion and influencing the innermost parts of one's entity and, on the other hand, because of being based upon the divine nature of man, is able to cause individuals to revolt against their own corruption and create a revolution of self against self which is called *tawbeh*, repentence. In group and class ideologies the only revolutionary power is that which causes individuals to

revolt against others or classes against classes, but they are never capable of causing a revolution of the individual against himself; in the same way that they are not capable of putting an individual under the control of his own conscience.

Islam, being a religion, and being the last one, more than any other divine religion, has come to establish social justice, and naturally its goal is to save the oppressed and the powerless and to fight the oppressors (57:25, 7:29). Islam addresses, however, not only the deprived and the powerless, in the same way that it has not attracted its supporters solely from that class. Islam, as history shows, has even attracted its supporters from those groups it has fought against, with the help of the power of religion on the one hand and man's divine nature on the other. Islam is the theory of humanity's victory over animality, victory of knowledge over ignorance, of justice over injustice, of equality over inequality, of virtue over corruption, of piety over faithlessness and victory of monotheism over polytheism. The victory of the oppressed over the oppressor is evidence of these victories.

Second, following the previous argument we should discuss this issue. Whether the true human culture is an essential one or whether there is no one culture. Also whether the concept of culture has a national and class oriented source and whether what exists or will exist is cultures and not culture.

This again depends on whether or not mankind as a species enjoys an original single nature and whether that nature gives unity to man's culture or whether there is no such single nature but cultures are the result of histori-

cal, tribal and geographical factors, or the outcome of class and personal interests. Islam, acknowledging the unity of divine nature in its world view is for both unity in ideology and unity in culture.

Third, obviously an ideology can be said to be based on human values and consequently have a humanistic nature only when it is not a group ideology, but a general one, not an ideology based on man's division and diversion but a unified ideology encompassing all, not one which is based on profit making but one which is natural to man.

Fourth, is man's ideology unique in time and place? Is mankind doomed to have different ideologies in different places and different times? Does the principle of contradiction (according to place) and the principle of mutation and change (according to time) govern each ideology? In other words, can it be said that man's ideology is absolute and not relative in respect to time and place, just as it is general and not particular in relation to groups?

Whether an ideology is absolute or relative with respect to space and time, in turn, depends on the one hand, whether its origin is man's nature and its goal is the happiness of mankind: or its origin is in group interests and is based on tribal and class sentiments.

And on the other hand it depends on what we take the nature of social changes to consist of. Is it that when a society goes through changes and leaves behind one era to start another, the nature of that society changes, and consequently, the rules governing it change too, in the same way that water turns into vapour after a period

of high temperature and then the rules governing it will be the rules governing gases, not those governing liquids? Or, are social changes and the manner of social changes stable? Does a society change its state and stage and not its methods and laws, in the same way that animate beings go through changes in evolution from the moment of their creation, while the laws of evolution are constant.

The question that an ideology is absolute or relative from the point of time and place, on the other hand, depends on the view of that ideology and whether it is a scientific, a philosophical, or a religious one. A scientific ideology, being based on a variable view, cannot be an invariable ideology, as opposed to a philosophical ideology which is based on primary principles and primary truths, or a religious ideology which is based on revelation and prophecy.

As there isn't sufficient time to discuss the issue of divine nature, which is the main issue in Islamic learnings, we cannot discuss the issue of social changes either. In the fourth book of this series, however, where we will discuss history and society we will examine social changes and their relation to man's divine nature.

Fifth, is an ideology itself governed by the principle of stability or by the principle of variability? We discussed previously the question whether human ideology varies according to different times and different places. There, we discussed the issue of nullification and transformation of ideologies, but we are going to discuss something else now: the change and evolution of an ideology. An ideology, no matter whether it is inclusive or exclusive from

the point of content, no matter if it is relative or absolute, since it is a phenomenon and phenomena are variable and subject to evolution and change, is it constantly changing and evolving? Does the reality of an ideology at its birth differ from its reality during its growth and expansion? In other words, should an ideology be constantly modified, altered, improved, and revised by its leaders and ideologists — as seen in the case of modern, materialistic ideologies — or else would it soon be outmoded, obsolete and lose its validity? Or is it possible for an ideology to be based and arranged on the main trend of the society and that of man, so as to eliminate any need for revision, modification and alteration by the leaders, thus limiting the role of the leaders and ideologists to the field of jurisprudence and not in the content of the ideology.

The answer to this question, also, will be clarified through the answers to the previous questions.<sup>16</sup>

### **Islam: The Universal, Comprehensive Ideology**

Islam, which is based on such an ideology, is a universal and realistic ideology. In Islam all aspects of human needs, regardless of their being earthly or divine, physical or spiritual, individual or social, rational or emotional, have been taken into consideration. In a way the total Islamic teachings is comprised of three parts.

First, the principles of faith. With regard to these principles, every individual Muslim is obliged to carry out a scholarly and scientific study so that he is logically convinced of their validity — these principles cannot be accepted blindly as articles of faith.

Second, moral principles, which are traits that every

Muslim should acquire and the opposite of which he should avoid. What one is obliged to do in this respect is to restrain one's passions and form one's character.

Third, commandments, which are directions concerning one's external and objective activities, whether they are aimed at improving one's present life or at exalting one's status in the next life, or whether they are concerned with one's personal or one's social life.

The principles of faith in Islam, according to Shi'ism, are five: monotheism, justice, prophecy, imamate,<sup>17</sup> and resurrection.

Regarding the principles of faith, it is the duty of each individual to study and examine them and acquire the correct belief in them. Islam does not consider it sufficient to follow and obey the leaders blindly; rather it demands that every individual should examine the validity of his faith personally. Worship, from the point of view of Islam, is not limited to physical worship such as praying and fasting or financial duties such as *zakat*, tithe, and *khoms*.<sup>18</sup>

There is also another kind of worship and this is mediation. Exercise of the mind, or meditation, if directed toward spiritual awakening and enlightenment, is superior to years of physical worship.

### **Errors of Thought in the View of the Quran**

The Great Quran which calls for thinking and thoughtful conclusions and which considers meditation as a kind of worship, and which does not consider the principles of faith acceptable unless they are obtained through logical analysis, has paid attention to one basic question. The

question is how do the errors of thought originate? Where is the main source of error and sin? What should one do, if one intends to think correctly, and not make mistakes or deviate?

In the Holy Quran many causes of mistakes and errors have been mentioned which are as follows.

#### 1. Reliance on Presumption Instead of Knowledge and Certainty.

The Quran says: *If you obey most of those on earth they would mislead you far from God's way. They follow naught but an opinion, and they do but guess.* (6:116)

In several verses, the Holy Quran strongly opposes reliance on presumption and says: *(O man), follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge . . .* (17:36)

Today, philosophy has cast light on the fact that this has been one of the main causes of mistakes. One thousand years after the Quran, Descartes considered this as his first logical principle. He says, "... [I] accept nothing as true which I did not clearly recognize to be so: that is to say carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudice in judgements, and I accept in them nothing more than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I could have no occasion to doubt it."<sup>19</sup>

#### 2. Personal Desires and Bias.

To have correct judgement, a person should keep his complete impartiality towards what he thinks about, that is, he should try to search only for the truth and concede only to evidence and documentary evidence, like a judge investigating a case who should be impartial towards both parties involved. If the judge has a personal bias towards one of the parties, he will be unconsciously

attracted towards the evidence of that party and the evidence of the other party will remain over-looked, causing the judge to make an error.

In his thinking, if man does not retain his impartiality in rejecting or confirming an argument and if his personal bias is for one side or another, he will unconsciously judge in favour of his personal leanings. That is why the Quran considers personal bias, like reliance on suspicion, one of the causes of deviation from the truth. In Chapter 53, verse 23, it is said, . . . *They follow but a guess and that which (they) themselves desire . . .*

### 3. Haste

Making judgements and comments requires a certain amount of evidence and unless enough evidence is available, any decision will be made in haste and can be a cause for error. The Quran has repeatedly hinted at man's limited knowledge and the insufficiency of his knowledge for making certain important judgements and regards dogmatic statements on these as most imprudent. For example, it says, . . . *and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little.* (17:85)

Imam Sadiq (the sixth Imam), peace be upon him, said, "In the Quran, God sent His servants an exclusive call and advised them with two verses: one is that they should not confirm anything unless they are certain about it (haste in confirming) and the other is that they should not reject anything unless they are certain about it (haste in rejection)." In a holy verse, God says, . . . *Hath not the covenant of the Scripture been taken on their behalf that they should not speak aught concerning God save the truth?*" (7:169) In another verse He says: 'Nay,

*but they denied that, the knowledge whereof they could not compass."* (10:39)

#### **4. Traditionalism and Obsession with the Past**

Because of his primordial nature, when man faces a certain thought or idea which has been accepted by the past generations, he is apt to accept it without question. The Quran advises us not to accept the beliefs and the accepted ideas of our ancestors without weighing them against our wisdom and it also reminds us to have independence of thought in confronting the beliefs of the past. In Chapter 2, verse 170 God says, '*And when it is said unto them; Follow that which God has revealed, they say: we follow that wherein we found our fathers. What! Even though their fathers had no understanding and were not guided?"* (2:170)

#### **5. Hero-worship**

Another cause for deviation of thought is the inclination toward heroes. Because of their great personalities, great men of the past or present influence the thought, decision and intention of others, and as a matter of fact they dominate both others thought and intention. People think in the same way as they do and make similar decisions to them. When faced with them, people lose their independence of thought and decision making.

The Glorious Quran calls us to independence of thought. It considers blind submission to great men and celebrities the cause of eternal adversity. That is why it quotes the misled people who say on the Day of Resurrection: "*Our Nourisher! Lo! We obeyed our princes and great men, and they misled us from the way!"* (33:67)

### **The Sources of Thought in Islam**

The Quran, which calls for contemplation, in addition to warning against the deviation of thought, presents the sources of thought too. That is to say, it shows the subjects which are worth being investigated by man and being used as a source of his knowledge.

In general, Islam opposes the waste of mental energy on issues which have no out-come except mental fatigue, that is, things that man has no way of investigating, things which are worthless to him.

The Holy Prophet described the kind of knowledge whose existence or non-existence makes no difference to the life of human beings as being absurd. But it encourages the pursuit of such knowledge available to man which is useful to him.

The Holy Quran presents three subjects for beneficial thought:<sup>20</sup>

#### **1. Nature**

Throughout the Quran, there are many verses in which nature, i.e., the earth, the sky, the stars, the sun, the moon, the clouds, the rain, the wind, the movement of ships on the sea, the plants, and the animals are mentioned. In short, the whole range of tangible phenomena that is mentioned as the subjects about which we are advised to think attentively and from which to make conclusions. We mention one verse as an example: "Say: Behold what is in the heavens and the earth!" (10:101)

#### **2. History**

There are several verses in the Quran which call for the study of our ancestors and introduce their history as a source of knowledge. According to the Quran, the history

of mankind evolves according to a series of laws and principles. The historical glories, hardships, successes, failures, happiness, and misfortunes have strict and systematic rules and knowing those rules we can influence the present history and use it to improve our own lives and the lieves of others. This is a verse by way of example: "*Systems have passed away before you. Do but travel in the land and see the nature of the consequence for those who did deny (the messengers).*" (3:133)

### **3. The Human Psyche:**

The Quran mentions the human psyche as a specific source of knowledge. According to the Quran, the entire universe is the manifestation of God and there are signs and evidence for reaching the truth. The Quran defines the external world as the Signs and the internal world as the Souls and in this way it reminds us of the special importance of the human psyche. The expressions, signs and souls in Islamic literature originate from this. "*We shall show them Our Signs upon the horizons and within themselves until it be made known unto them that it is the Truth.*" (51:53)

Kant, the German philosopher, in a famous statement which has also been engraved on his tombstone, says: "Two things fill the mind with ever-increasing wonder and are the more often and the more intensely the mind of thought is drawn to them. The starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."<sup>21</sup>



## Footnotes

1. Hobbes, the famous English philosopher holds this view about man.
2. Descartes' famous theory.
3. Islamic philosophers hold a principle in the interaction of the soul and the body which is expressed as follows:  
النفس و البدن يتعاكسان ايجاباً و اعداداً
4. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1962, p. 179.
5. Will Durant; *The Pleasure of Philosophy*, p. 240.
6. Ibid., p. 114.
7. Ibid., p. 168.
8. Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals*, p. 86.
9. George Sarton, *Six Wings, Men of Science*.
10. Ibid., p. 305.
11. The author does not mention the source of this quotation. Translated by the translator.
12. William James, p. 389.
13. Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*.
14. As it is understood from the glorious verses of the Quran, these discrepancies and needs have existed since the time of Noah, the prophet. The prophets before him had had no Divine Law. See *Tafsir e-mizan*, under 2:231.
15. There is occasionally a misunderstanding about the meaning of this word which means "all mankind" and it is taken as a synonym for the "masses", as opposed to the elite. Because Islam addresses *al-nas*, i.e., all people, it is claimed that Islam is the religion of the masses and this, incidentally, is considered an advantage. But as a matter of fact, Islam while supporting the masses, addresses all mankind including the elite and its ideology is not

a group or class ideology. What gives Islam an advantage is that it calls upon both the exploited and the exploiter and with recourse to the nature of man it probably arouses man's conscience towards the exploited and the oppressed.

16. In the article about the end of prophecy, in the first volume of *Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets*, published by Hosseynieh Ershad, which was later published as a separate pamphlet, we have discussed the totality and general application of Islamic ideology and the role of jurisprudence in its application to different circumstances and variable time situations. That which undergoes change and evolution is Islamic jurisprudence, not Islamic ideology. Researchers can refer to that pamphlet.

17. The twelve successors of Muhammad who, according to Shi'ism are regarded as taking Muhammad's place as leaders of the Muslims, in their lifetime. The first was Ali and the last, the Mahdi, who is still in occultation and will appear someday.

18. One-fifth of the total yearly income considered due to God and hence payable to Muhammad's descendants.

19. Muhammad Ali Froughi, *The Evolution of Philosophy in Europe* Vol. I. This is the source the author mentions. I have taken Descartes' words from *Descartes Selections*, English version by Ralph M. Eaton, 1927: "Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking for Truth in the Sciences, Part I."

20. In the article, "Knowledge in the Quran", which was mentioned before, the question of subjects and sources of knowledge has been discussed in detail.

21. The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 2nd. Ed. "Critique of Practical Reason, Conclusion."

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